

Message Text

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SUBJECT: DC DIRECTORATE APPROVES INITIATIVE TO SEEK PROGRAM-
MATIC UNDERSTANDING

1. SUMMARY: AT AN ALL-DAY DIRECTORATE MEETING APRIL 27 THAT LASTED DEEP INTO THE NIGHT, THE DC LEADERSHIP AUTHORIZED PARTY PRESIDENT MORO TO BEGIN EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITY OF REACHING A PROGRAMMATIC UNDERSTANDING WITH THE OTHER "CONSTITUTIONAL" PARTIES ON SPECIFIC ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ISSUES. THE DC INITIATIVE IS INTENDED TO MEET PCI AND PSI DEMANDS FOR GREATER PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT, WHILE DRAWING THE LINE AGAINST ANY AGREEMENT THAT WOULD ALTER THE EXISTING POLITICAL FRAMEWORK. AS AN INDICATION OF THE NERVOUSNESS WITHIN THE PARTY LEST THE INITIATIVE RESULT IN A DE FACTO POLITICAL ACCORD WITH THE PCI, MORO'S NEGOTIATING MANDATE IS TIGHTLY RESTRICTED TO SEEKING AN OPERATIONAL UNDERSTANDING ON A FEW, PRECISE ISSUES. MOREOVER, THE DC DIRECTORATE (AND POSSIBLY THE PARTY'S NATIONAL COUNCIL) WILL HAVE TO GIVE ITS APPROVAL BEFORE ANY PROPOSAL CAN BE FORMALLY OFFERED. END SUMMARY.

2. AT A MOMENTOUS MEETING OF THE DC DIRECTORATE APRIL 27,
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VIRTUALLY ALL OF THE DC'S MAJOR LEADERS ADDRESSED THE CENTRAL ISSUE OF HOW FAR THE PARTY SHOULD GO IN RELATIONS WITH THE PCI. IN EFFECT, THE MEETING CONCLUDED THE FIRST PHASE OF THE CURRENT POLITICAL ROUND (INITIATED BY THE PSI) BY UNEQUIVOCALLY REJECTING THE SOCIALIST ARGUMENT THAT THE COUNTRY'S ACUTE DIFFICULTIES COULD NOT BE RESOLVED WITHOUT THE PCI'S PARTICIPATION IN THE MAJORITY OR

ACCEPTANCE OF THE EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT FORMULA. IN AUTHORIZING DC PRESIDENT MORO (ASSISTED BY MEMBERS OF THE SECRETARIAT AND PARLIAMENTARY GROUP HEADS PICCOLI AND BARTOLOMEI) TO BEGIN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE "CONSTITUTIONAL" PARTIES TO DETERMINE WHETHER A PROGRAMMATIC UNDERSTANDING ON SPECIFIC ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ISSUES CAN BE ACHIEVED, THE DC DIRECTORATE OPENED A NEW PHASE, THIS TIME INITIATED AND LED BY THE DC.

3. IN ITS UNANIMOUS DECLARATION, THE DIRECTORATE APPROVED MORO'S FORMULA FOR MEETING THE LEFT'S DEMANDS FOR GREATER PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKING. THE DC WILL OFFER THE OTHER PARTIES (READ THE PCI) THE POSSIBILITY TO PARTICIPATE FORMALLY IN THE FORMULATION OF MAJOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL LEGISLATION THROUGH ACHIEVEMENT OF A PROGRAMMATIC UNDERSTANDING ON THE "THINGS THAT NEED TO BE DONE." WHILE THE DC WILL APPROACH THIS EXERCISE WITH "SERIOUSNESS AND RIGOR", IT WILL NOT, HOWEVER, SEEK AN ACCORD "AT ANY PRICE." IN ZACCAGNINI'S WORDS, THE DC WILL NOT ACCEPT ANY UNDERSTANDING THAT INVOLVES "CHANGE IN THE EXISTING POLITICAL FRAMEWORK." MORO'S NEGOTIATING MANDATE WILL THEREFORE BE TIGHT. THE DIRECTORATE DOCUMENT SPECIFIES THAT BEFORE CONCLUDING ANY AGREEMENT, THE NEGOTIATING TEAM WILL REFER THE PROPOSALS BACK TO THE DIRECTORATE, AND IF NECESSARY, FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE DC'S DELIBERATIVE BODY, THE NATIONAL COUNCIL.

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4. THE OUTCOME OF THE DIRECTORATE, WHILE NOT UNEXPECTED, REFLECTS A HIGH DEGREE OF NERVOUSNESS AMONG MANY IN THE PARTY THAT GREAT CARE MUST BE EXERCISED TO ASSURE THAT A PROGRAMMATIC UNDERSTANDING WITH THE PCI REMAINS DISTINCT FROM A POLITICAL ACCORD. ZACCAGNINI HIMSELF CONCEDED THAT AN EVENTUAL AGREEMENT "WOULD NOT BE WITHOUT POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE." WHILE CIRCUMSTANCES (THE EVER DIMINISHING "INDIRECT COLLABORATION" PROVIDED THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT BY THE ABSTAINING PARTIES) OBLIGES THE DC TO SEEK SUCH AN UNDERSTANDING IN ORDER TO FULFILL ITS RESPONSIBILITY TO GOVERN, ZACCAGNINI SAID THAT THE "NORMAL DEMOCRATIC DIALECTIC MUST BE RE-ESTABLISHED AS SOON AS THE PRESENT PHASE OF GRAVE DIFFICULTIES IS OVERCOME." FANFANI WAS EVEN MORE EXPLICIT. HE SAID THE DC MUST ASSURE THAT ANY PROGRAMMATIC UNDERSTANDING DOES NOT IMPEDE THE DC'S EFFORTS TO RE-ESTABLISH A DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY (WITH THE LAY PARTIES) "AS SOON AS POSSIBLE." THE AGREEMENT, ZACCAGNINI SAID, MUST THEREFORE BE LIMITED

TO AN "OPERATIVE ACCORD ON REAL PROBLEMS (PUBLIC ORDER, THE ECONOMY)" AND CANNOT ASSUME THE CHARACTER "OF A GENERAL POLITICAL ACCORD OF THE MAJORITY." FANFANI ALSO ADDED THAT THE UNDERSTANDING MUST NOT RESULT IN THE WEAKENING OF ITALY'S ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN NATO AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY.

5. WHILE SUPPORTING THE MORO FORMULA, PARLIAMENTARY GROUP HEAD PICCOLI ALSO NOTED THE "APPREHENSION" OF MANY DC DEPUTIES, PARTICULARLY AMONG THE YOUNGER RENEWALISTS. IN RECENT WEEKS, MANY OF THE NEW PARLIAMENTARIANS HAVE GRAVITATED AROUND FORZE NUOVE LEADER DONAT-CATTIN, THE MOST OUTSPOKEN CRITIC OF THE MORO INITIATIVE. IN A HARSH SPEECH TO THE DIRECTORATE, DONAT-CATTIN DOUBTED THAT AN UNDERSTANDING COULD BE SEPARATED FROM A POLITICAL ALLIANCE WITH THE PCI (PROGRAMS ARE NOT "NEUTRAL"). HE FEARED THAT THE CONFIDENTIAL

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PCI WOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF A PROGRAMMATIC ACCORD TO INSIST, OVER TIME, ON FULL PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT IF ITS SUPPORT WERE NOT BE WITHDRAWN AT A CRITICAL MOMENT. DONAT-CATTIN ACCORDINGLY PROPOSED THAT THE DC'S NATIONAL COUNCIL SHOULD APPROVE ANY AGREEMENT BEFORE IT COULD BE FORMALLY PROPOSED TO THE OTHER PARTIES. THE WORDING OF THE DIRECTORATE'S FINAL STATEMENT STRONGLY SUGGESTS THAT THE DC WILL TAKE THIS COURSE.

6. THE DC WILL NOW EMBARK ON A SERIES OF CONSULTATIONS WITH THE OTHER PARTIES TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE BASIS EXISTS FOR A PROGRAMMATIC UNDERSTANDING. THE INITIATIVE IS LIKELY TO TAKE SEVERAL WEEKS. PRELIMINARY REACTION FROM THE LEFT PARTIES HAS BEEN PREDICTABLY CRITICAL. IN AN EDITORIAL IN AVANTI, THE PSI DOUBTS THAT THE DC PROPOSAL CAN LEAD TO A "CONSTRUCTIVE DISCUSSION" AS LONG AS THE INITIATIVE IS NOT DIRECTED AT ACHIEVING A POLITICAL ACCORD. THE PCI'S ATTITUDE APPEARS TO BE MORE CAUTIOUS; SO FAR THE PARTY HAS WITHHELD ITS COMMENT. GARDNER

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